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*Testimony in Support of: **S.B. 1 and H.B. 5387**: An Act Concerning Paid Family and Medical Leave and **H.B. 5386**: An Act Concerning Various Pay Equity and Fairness Measures.*

Senator Gomes, Senator Miner, Representative Porter, and members of the Labor Committee of the Connecticut General Assembly:

My name is Rebecca Yungk and I am a second year graduate student at UConn School of Social Work. I currently reside in New Britain, CT.

Over the past 50 years, the United States workforce has changed dramatically, women currently make up 50% of the workforce. But, in order for female employees to balance work with caregiving, pregnancy or other medical responsibilities for themselves and their families, there must be workplace protections to have meaningful opportunities to take time off from work. As well as job protections when re-entering the workforce.

Establishing a Paid Family Leave system would be an important equitable health-promoting tool for mothers, children, and families. Paid Leave has shown to contribute many health benefits, by helping reduce stressful situations. By establishing a State Paid Leave policy it can also help promote equity by including workers who are less likely to have access to Paid Family Leave through their employers who are also less likely to be protected by FMLA.

Women are also more likely to experience interruptions in employment. These women usually have parents in need of caretaking, and also have young children. Because of these interruptions, they will most likely experience a decrease in wages when returning to the workforce. Paid Family Leave and Pay Equity protections will boost the chances of women returning to the workforce and will receive equitable pay.

Guaranteeing a living wage and equal pay are critical; ensuring that workers can earn paid leave would help stop income loss that impacts women's earnings when they need to take a day off work to recover from an illness or care for a sick child.

Both these policies will create a more attractive work environment to current and potential employees.

Please do the right thing and pass S.B. 1, H.B. 5387, and H.B. 5386.

Thank you for your time, and I hope the committee will move this bill forward.
Rebecca Yungk